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RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

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#163

INTERMODALISM IN THE FAR WEST

LETTERS

RTN seems to bring more sad news than glad these days--what with Amtrak's desperate funding crisis, and then the article by James Killen (1st Oct issue). As I read his "horror story" I kept thinking, "Have I picked up a 1973 RTN by mistake?" What a contrast between his tale of woe and my experience last week on a Las Vegas-Denver flight. Altho the temperature in Vegas was near 100° as we took off (then dropped to 40 below at 30,000 feet) and was 40° in Denver, the cabin temperature, humidity and pressure never varied one degree. In hundreds of flights I have had the same experience. Why can the airlines do it right and the rails can't? Rail air conditioning should be child's play compared to a plane's, which must contend with not only tremendously greater temperature variations but also with sizeable pressure changes as well.

Of course my Denver plane had a spotlessly clean and clear window (as always on a plane) thru which I watched a breathtaking sunset as we soared up thru mile-high columns of twisted clouds ablaze with pinks and purples. All of which was followed by a nighttime view of the Rockies bathed in full moon silverescence. Both sights were equal to anything I've ever seen thru a train window.

Robert Barta
San Francisco, California

I have been forced to the reluctant conclusion that the future of the long haul passenger train under Amtrak is hopeless. For years we have supported Amtrak with our dollars used to buy tickets for which we received decreasing service and pleasure. Our experiences last year, culminating in a disastrous trip home on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED, have convinced us that Amtrak cannot and will not successfully operate long haul passenger trains.

G. J. Doyle
Monterey Park, California

It is strange that few letter writers appear fully aware of the issue which is truly at the heart of Amtrak's present serious troubles. We all know that Amtrak must spend nearly $3 for each $1 it receives in fares. Surely it is obvious to any observer that there is only one reason why this devastating circumstance must be--why passenger trains are "inherent money losers." This is the same reason that railroad branch line and yard operations are "inherent heavy losers" and why rail commuter lines are "hopelessly unprofitable." That reason is plainly and simply the outrageously inefficient and extravagantly wasteful use of labor which these services presently require. It is sad indeed (tho quite unnecessary) that even before a new Amtrak train ever turns a wheel it is doomed by definition to substantial deficits simply because labor costs are artificially and unnecessarily higher than even maximum levels of safety and service require. And the train will lose money even if it runs at 100% capacity.

Until Amtrak and the private railroads confront this core issue, they will continue to stumble from one financial crisis to the next...

James E. Cane
San Francisco, California

I would like to add my own heartbreak story about the SOUTHWEST LIMITED: I had purchased tickets in the thru sleeper for an early September trip eastbound. I was never informed by Amtrak of the discontinuance of this car (I only learned thru RTN). Luckily, Amtrak had made me substitute reservations, but had not been innovative enough to re-route me thru Chicago. Thus I was not only placed over the wheels, but had to leave the sleeper at the equivalent of 4:25am in Kansas City and wait until 6:50am to board train 30. Moreover, on the SOUTHWEST not only was there no first class diner or lounge, but no lounge of any kind! The only non-revenue passenger car was the hi-level diner. Amtrak seems to know how to make a bad train good (the SUNSET) but is incapable of keeping a good one good.

Duane W. Roller
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

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ON THE COVER

A ceremonial train, the SAN JOAQUIN, train 710, pulls to a stop at the Richmond CA Amtrak-BART station on Oct 28, the inaugural date of the new transfer station, to take California Governor Brown and other dignitaries on a train ride to two more inaugurals. See our complete report on p. 12. Ektachrome by Message Media.

AMTRAK BUDGET PROBLEM WORSENS; CONGRESS GIVES RAILS ONLY $8 MILLION

Final action has been taken on Amtrak's request for $56.5 million in supplemental funds for the current fiscal year, and Congress would come up with only $8 million of that request. While the Senate on Oct 28 in subcommittee decided to give Amtrak $18 million more (the funding being proposed by Sen. Birch Bayh of Indiana), Amtrak said that it would still drop the 22 trains (most in the Northeast Corridor) scheduled to go down Nov 6, as $18 million wouldn't be enough for its needs. But when Senate-House conferees met Nov 3 they could agree on only $8 million for the rail corporation, and directed Amtrak not to make the 22 Corridor cuts but instead to quickly discontinue or restructure "money-losing" long distance train routes. Amtrak's total funding for this fiscal year is now $496.5 million for operations (less than the $500 million set by the White House), and Congress has instructed Amtrak to work within that budget.

On Nov 7 Amtrak announced that to comply with these restrictions, it would attempt to cut $30 million from its operating budget by dropping the FLORIDIAN and by making the following trains "subject to discontinuance": the NATIONAL LIMITED, LONE STAR, LAKE SHORE LIMITED, MOUNT RAINIER, and SAN JOAQUIN. In addition, Amtrak said it would group together for purposes of analysis (a euphemism for combining and/or restructuring) the following trains: the EMPIRE BUILDER, NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, SOUTHWEST LIMITED, and PIONEER. Amtrak also warned that by next July or August it would experience a "severe funding crisis" which could result in a shutdown of the entire Amtrak system. These announcements were contained in a letter sent to all Congressmen from Amtrak's VP-Government Affairs, Mr. Bruce Pike. Amtrak scheduled a Board meeting for Nov 16 to make a final decision on the FLORIDIAN discontinuance, to discuss route criteria and procedures on the other trains named above, and to consult with the DOT Secretary on the LAKE SHORE experimental route. An Amtrak spokesman said that it probably would take six months to effect the proposed trainoffs (with the possible exception of the FLORIDIAN). See further coverage of the present crisis situation in this issue.

SOUTHERN CRESCENT MIGHT BE DISCONTINUED

Southern Railway President L. Stanley Crane said this month that the SOUTHERN CRESCENT will probably lose $7 million this year, and that at some unspecified date the loss would become intolerable to SR, so that a trainoff, seeking of federal subsidies, or turnover to Amtrak will have to be sought.

WHY AMTRAK NEEDS MORE MONEY

Amtrak President Paul Reistrup's Statement before the House Subcommittee on Transportation and Commerce, October 12.

How has Amtrak done, in a business that does not make a profit in any country of the world? Since 1971 Amtrak has been given slightly over $2 billion in federal operating support--that's an average of $344 million per year. (That's also averaging-in the cumulative inflation since 1971.) For capital improvements we have been given $1.2 billion--or $206 million a year. I think it is important to point out that Amtrak funding has never exceeded 1.4 percent of the nation's transportation budget.

I should also note that since 1971 we have added routes or trains in... 34 states... (and) in the Canadian provinces of Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia. Some of these added routes or trains were put on with state funding support, but even these have increased our deficit.

I have said before and I repeat here that it is my conclusion that we should not be operating service on any route on less than daily frequencies, and I think two times a day in each direction is even better. I might add that I can support an amendment requiring experimental trains to operate on at least a daily basis, but again, only if the funding is provided. In any "corridor" I do not think we should be operating fewer than three services a day each way, and I think the optimum is about five round-trips daily.

And yet here we are today, causing problems for ourselves as well as for members of Congress who are expected to represent their constituents as well as the national interest, cutting frequencies all across the country to less-than-daily service, and thinking about the possibility that some routes may have to be cut back to one trip a week. What has happened?

Very simply, we are now being told to operate about 20 percent more service than we are given the dollars for. Just so there is absolutely no confusion about this, let me say clearly that I cannot regard this as Congress' fault and particularly it is not this committee's fault. This committee supported our full funding request, as did the Congress as a whole in enacting our authorization. The new budget committees also have supported full funding for Amtrak service, and, again, the Congress has ratified this support in enacting its own budget ceilings. The appropriations committees have come up short, but they have been following the Administration's lead. There is great resistance in the appropriations process to approving "unbudgeted" funds.

Our initial estimate for fiscal 1978 operating needs requiring federal funding was for $534.1 million. This was within the $545 million authorization already on the books. The one factor most difficult to predict more than 18 months in advance, which is when the first cut for the budget must be made, is of course inflation. We have a better fix on the cost factors now, and our current figures indicate that we will need the full $545 million authorized to get thru FY 1978 without cutting any service. (There are some trains that should be cut anyway...)

But the Administration, by not supporting our request, effectively supported the alternative, which is the elimination of trains. The Ford Budget allowed $490 million. It is worth noting that the Office of Management and Budget only recommended $456 million. The Carter amendments to the Ford Budget increased the amount for operating subsidy to $500 million. The final appropriation approval was for $488.5 million. Our capital request was reduced from a requested $316 million to $108 million.

At each point when an amount less than our request for operating funds was contemplated, we advised that reduced funding would mean the elimination of service. Our hope was to apply the Route and Service Criteria, which were approved by this committee. And the reports of the House Appropriations Committee, the Senate Appropriations Committee and the report of the Conference of Managers each specified that we were to live within the approved amounts by reducing service, stressing the fact that we had the approved criteria and procedures to rely upon for reducing service.

It must be noted, however, that the route and service criteria and procedures were not designed to be a budget-cutting mechanism. The procedures are biased heavily toward taking every possible step to improve a route's performance before it is decided that a route cannot be saved and should be eliminated. The procedures themselves are lengthy and involve complex comparative analyses of possible alternatives or changes in a route or service, the receipt of public comment and suggestions, and a considerable amount of formal "due process" before a service can be removed.

By way of an example, the route furthest along in the procedures now is that of the FLORIDIAN trains... If there ever was a route that was destined to be in difficulty, it is this one--it wanders all over the map and over some very dubious track before it gets to Florida. It never did get to Atlanta, as the Amtrak Incorporators intended--the route as it was originally started was in effect on a detour from day one. It no longer even goes thru Indianapolis --which is the loss of another important market--because of bad track in Indiana. It is now on its fourth detour in Indiana. Much of the line it's on in the South doesn't even have any signals. Yet the FLORIDIAN's review under the procedures, which began in March of this year, just yesterday went into the public-hearing phase. Even if the final outcome of the process is outright discontinuance--and in no way would it be proper to assume that discontinuance will be the outcome--it would be months before the trains could stop. This would take us well into the current fiscal year, and the savings could only be gained for those months remaining after the trains stop.

I think this is a very important point. We were told to use the criteria and procedures to take trains off and thus live within the approved funding, yet the criteria and procedures were not designed for killing services. They were designed to rationalize services and routes, and they were designed to be applied carefully and constructively. I believe it would be contrary to the spirit of the procedures for Amtrak to assume in advance that the final outcome would be the complete elimination of routes. We have to use the process honestly to determine the best balance between the public's needs and the costs. We have to first explore possible changes and service improvements before finding that there is no way a route can be saved. This is all written in the rules. It is not a budget-cutting device.

"The budget process is driving public policy decisions. Accountants are writing national transportation policy."

Yet what we have now stands policy-making on its head. The budget process is now driving the public policy decisions. OMB and DOT are telling us that the deficit must not only be contained, it must be reduced. We are telling them and telling you that this means fewer trains and fewer routes. We are being told to conform anyway. The last official statement of the Congress on the matter is contained in the most recent appropriations legislation and in the legislative history. Congress has spoken. OMB and DOT now do not even support the $500 million for operations that is in the Administration's budget. Accountants are writing national transportation policy.

Ordered, in effect, to shrink the system, we have had to look first for places where we could make immediate savings. ...it was necessary for

management to look for ways we would achieve immediate savings without going thru the formal procedures. We looked first at routes with more than one train to see if trains could be dropped. And we looked at single-train routes to see what savings could be achieved by cutting back from daily service. In every case we did it by the numbers; we didn't play any favorites. What governed us were our best estimates on true avoidable costs, less revenues.

In our first round of frequency reductions, we made service changes calculated to save some $23 million in deficits. In our second round of cuts, which is now underway, we are looking for another $27 million in savings. These savings do not address the problem of financing increased inflation that is currently estimated at about $11 million. We are also getting underway in applying the criteria and procedures to see what can possibly be saved during the fiscal year. We are assuming that the criteria process will take six months at a minimum, so this increases the problem of making savings that are effective in FY 1978. This also assumes that there will not be time for public hearings. We are assuming that the procedures will result in the complete discontinuance of at least one route, plus the radical restructuring of 5 or 6 other routes, which may mean consolidations of two or more routes over long distances, or the truncation of routes.

In effect, these would amount to partial route discontinuances. For example, we are looking at combining the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR trains with the SOUTHWEST LIMITED trains as far west as Ogden, and running a rerouted SOUTHWEST LIMITED service via Ogden and then south to Los Angeles from there. This would be tantamount to discontinuing the entire SOUTHWEST LIMITED route except for the endpoints of Chicago and L.A. One area, between Ogden and L.A., would gain new service.

I think I should add that, because of the revenues, the Amtrak structure is leveraged against achieving savings by cutting service. The first million in savings can be found without inconveniencing really large numbers of passengers, but to find the 20th or 30th million in savings, the cuts in service have to go very deep. We have to cut a lot to save a little, because we are also cutting revenues. Eliminating whole routes is more efficient because stations and maintenance facilities can be closed and more of the fixed costs reduced. But this approach requires the use of the criteria and procedures. And I have to say that making the required cuts by eliminating routes is going to make it very hard to keep the system national in any true sense of the word. I think if this is the government's intent, then our basic law should be changed...

We're 6 1/2 years old. Amtrak's first management felt it had to wait the first 2 years, which was sort of an "experimental" period, before it could be sure Amtrak was here to stay. Design work had been going on, but orders for the Amfleet equipment were not placed until well into the third year. It was not until this past summer that we had this fleet fully delivered and deployed in revenue service.

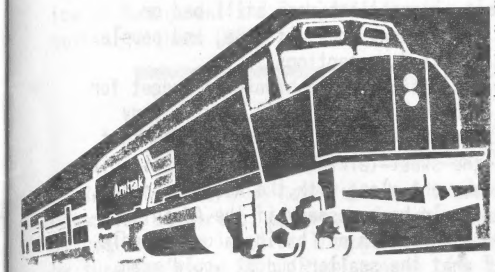
Lead times on the new Superliner equipment have been similar. They have been in the procurement pipeline for 3 years. Funding authorization was considered by this committee as long as 4 years ago. These lead times are a fact of life. It takes time. You can't take an industry that had been dead for 20 years and bring it back to life overnight (Ed. note: the car-building industry). We have had 6 years--really 4, because for the first 2 years Amtrak was in a holding pattern--and the results are only now appearing...

The Amtrak system needs a number of things. First, we need more funding, for capital improvements as well as operating needs. We have just issued our 5-year plan with funding requirements spelled out in detail for FY 1979, and with projections for 4 years beyond that. It is a moderately expansionary plan, but it is not as expansionary as we would really like.

Second, the Amtrak route system

does need to be rationalized. We have some routes in the wrong places. Some promising markets are not optimally served as a result. The routes thru the thinnest population areas worsen our overall ratios and make the whole system less efficient than it should be. The whole route structure needs to be re-examined and this process is now underway. We propose that Amtrak do this jointly with the DOT. As appropriate, the route and service criteria should be applied as they were originally intended, not as an emergency budget-cutting mechanism.

Third, the whole funding structure should be streamlined and strengthened, so that the top policymakers of the government are in charge of the policy, not lower-level budget analysts, as is presently the case. As it is now, our requests go to DOT, which in turn goes to OMB for the decisions. We are not dealing with the principals in the budget-making process. Policy is therefore being made in a way that I am sure no one on this committee intended.



Fourth, we need the support or at least the direct attention of the highest levels of the government. Congress created a responsible Board of Directors to insure that the public interest would be represented in the development of Amtrak policies. There have been unfilled vacancies on the Amtrak board for more than 2 years. We do not have a full board. At most meetings we do well to assemble a legal quorum. All but one of the Presidentially appointed members are now serving beyond their statutory terms.

I have been calling attention to the need for fundamental policy guidance from the U.S. Government since my first weeks with Amtrak. Our role needs to be defined, or redefined. We are not going to make a profit. Without funding the trains will not operate. What does the government, representing the people, want? The government must speak with one voice or the matter is going to be decided by default.

Fifth, we need continuity of funding to permit continuity of employment and therefore continuity of personnel and management development. Whether we are to have a larger or smaller Amtrak system or one about the same as it is today, Amtrak's employees and management personnel need to be able to plan on making a career in the passenger service. The present "revolving door" climate is fundamentally injurious to all our efforts to improve service and become more efficient. This means that we need stability in our funding so that we can at least stay abreast of inflation. Right now we have a freeze on hiring and promotions. It will save some money in the short run but in the longer run it is counterproductive...

Right now, our number-one need is the funding we have requested. If the system is to be shrunk, it should be changed in response to a carefully considered plan developed cooperatively between the Administration and the Congress. The way we are going at it now is the wrong way. A rational study may in fact reveal that growth is more appropriate, as a means of reducing unit costs--costs per passenger served, or per passenger mile.

...I told the Amtrak Board at our last meeting: "If this country wants intercity passenger rail service as a viable travel option for its citizens, then its funding level should permit such a system to be developed and operated properly. If we don't want to build and support a properly operated system, then maybe we should eliminate it entirely." I think that poses the real choice that must be made.

OUR TWENTY CENTS' WORTH FOR AMTRAK

by James Russell

The things that have been happening in Washington recently have been absolutely unbelieveable. A crazy charade has been going on, the outcome of which is a loss for you and me, the transportation consumers--and also a threatened loss for the nation as a whole as energy conservation continues to be a farce.

About 20¢ per capita in tax money is what now lies between a national rail passenger system that continues to improve and expand, and one that is in the beginning stages of dismantling. For less than the cost of mailing a 2-ounce letter of complaint to a Congressman, we could each contribute this small sum if Congress would let us and save the Amtrak system--the total contribution would be the $48.5 million that lies between dismantling and continuing to build.

Let's review this whole incredible scene that began last December. Amtrak operations nearly broke down nationwide last winter as a result of the SDP40F engine problem and the severe weather. Also on one or two recent occasions the entire Northeast Corridor was blocked by derailed freight. Amtrak's misstep was that it dealt with these problems as if they could be swept under the rug and no one would notice. People did notice, and they complained to their Senators and Congressmen. Into last summer, connections were still bad or nonexistent and Amtrak equipment maintenance somehow couldn't cope, and people wrote their Congressmen about hot cars and missed connections.

While this was happening, the new Administration was fashioning a budget for Amtrak that was too small, and Amtrak seemed to be accepting it. After many months of dealing with the hostile Mr. Coleman in the DOT, Amtrak thought that things would be a breeze with Mr. Adams, the sweet-talking and clever politician instead of the smart-alecky lawyer. Amtrak went along with the Adams approach, and failed to tell Congress how many cuts would be necessary if the Administration budget was accepted. Maybe Amtrak goofed too in not having a good handle on its own accounting or realizing itself what the smaller budget would mean. Amtrak seemed to think the game would be different under Adams--go along with him and all would be well. The trouble is that the bureaucracy sets rules more than individuals do, and so regardless of the official's tone of voice, the outcome is the same--your budget gets cut as small as possible unless you play the game right.

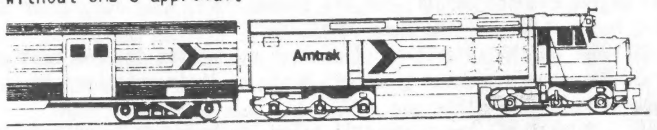
Congress has always supported Amtrak, but now they are starting to turn away. Remember, however, that the biggest hatchet was wielded by the Administration. Congress might have restored the Amtrak budget to what Amtrak wanted if Congress had been approached differently. But Congress has publicly complained about Amtrak's approach--"going for the jugular vein" said one. RTN has copies of correspondence in its files that show an arrogance in dealing with Congressmen that Amtrak has come to adopt. Coupled with the service complaints from their constituents, Congressmen have become peeved with Amtrak and for the first time have backed off on supporting the system.

Mr. Reistrup was rightly frustrated when he complained that federal accountants are writing transportation policy (see his testimony on preceding pages). The OMB cuts seemed quite arbitrary--just as the OMB money impoundment was back in the Nixon Administration. Bureaucratic politics don't change, only the individuals involved change. It's probably unrealistic for Amtrak to ask of the government that it speak with one voice; our government is a democracy, not a monarchy, and so each agency seeking public funds must compete with the others. At this point Congress seems to be telling Amtrak that it is unsatisfied with its performance. Many rail supporters find Amtrak's call to Congress to give all or nothing at all unrealistic and even distasteful. Mentioning the possible closing down of the whole Amtrak system seems to be going a bit far.

As for Congress, people get rightly disturbed over the committee system in which individuals with biased viewpoints wield power disproportionately. We have heard from several sources that Congressman McFall of Manteca CA, who was a key figure in disapproving Amtrak's recent request for supplemental funds, was recently talking with John Barnum, formerly of the DOT (remember what RTN called the Barnum & Coleman circus?), who must have told him of the greed of rail supporters. Some also believe that Mr. Biaggini of the SP has spoken to Mr. McFall recently. A number of rail supporters took the trouble to speak with McFall's assistants in person, but their words seemed to fall on deaf ears. One assistant was even said to be an auto freak, his office plastered with car pictures. We hope these people enjoy their role in dismantling America's most energy-efficient transportation system.

Amtrak, the DOT, and Congress are all playing games at the expense of the consumer and the nation. One thing is certain: it is now time for the rail consumer to arise and make his influence felt--more now than ever since 1971. These silly characters bumbling around Washington are playing a game that we must join. And with the weight of evidence on our side, we can make a big impact on public transportation policy.

The National Association of Railroad Passengers met with Secretary Adams at length recently, and came away feeling that rail supporters' main task is to convince President Carter of the need for full rail passenger service--his Office of Management and Budget is the big stumbling block. Even Adams can do nothing without OMB's approval.



Rail supporters we have talked with are hopping mad now. They are stressing organized support of passenger trains as never before. We will publish a list of regional and local rail supporting organizations later (send us your info to be sure you're on it). Right now we give the address of NARP, with which most regional groups are associated: 417 New Jersey Ave., S.E., Washington DC 20003.

Many supporters view the game going on in Washington as one of "corridors are profitable and necessary, long distance routes aren't." To a great degree, they are correct. The Washington bureaucracy and much of the press believes the incorrect cliche that only short-distance routes are viable. Dr. Dan Monaghan is one of the most persistent critics of those who feel that the Amtrak system should be shrunk to the Northeast Corridor only. Sometimes he gets carried away in feeling that Washington is zeroing in on Texas to take away its trains--and with Amtrak now talking about discontinuing the LONE STAR and the INTER-AMERICAN, he may be right! What has actually happened in the convoluted games of Washington is that in giving Amtrak $8 million to avoid the 22 train cuts in the Corridor, Congress has (unwittingly?) cast a vote for corridors versus long-hauls. Congress told Amtrak to go cut some whole routes instead--and of course in Amtrak's accounting system--which Dr. Monaghan and others contend is biased to begin with--that means cut out long distance trains primarily. But one must note that the cuts Amtrak is talking about have already been discussed by the DOT and by Amtrak as part ofthe process of " rationalizing" the system. In other words this route cutting was coming all the time, and we arrived at it only thru the convoluted process involving Amtrak, the DOT and Congress, that we have been discussing.

Now Amtrak and the DOT are to put their heads together to come up with a "zero-based" system--one in which no route is taken for granted--by next March. The system is supposed to be based on population and potential, not politics. Then the DOT will give the system its "blessing." The problem here is that we should not trust the DOT anymore than any other Washington bureaucracy. The rail-riding public needs to have a great deal of input into this process. It's

RAIL CANADA

VIA RAIL CANADA will obtain Canadian-built LRC trains. Transport Minister Otto Lang on Nov 2 announced the awarding of a contract to Bombardier-MLW Ltd for 22 locomotives and 50 coaches--enough for 10 trainsets plus spares. Canadian rail enthusiasts were ecstatic over the announcement, since it was a larger order than anyone had expected. The new lightweight trains will go into service first on the Montreal-Quebec route, and later in other parts of Canada. First operation is planned for 1980. Cost of the new equipment is about $90 million.

CP RAIL FERRY "Carrier Princess" went aground Nov 9 in Active Pass while on the Vancouver-Swartz Bay run with a heavy load of trucks.

BOMBARDIER-MLW LTD is overjoyed at the Canadian order for 22 locos and 50 cars, seeing it as a means of breaking into the international market for the new trains. Amtrak already has a lease-purchase agreement for two of the trains, and the manufacturer has inquiries from Portugal, Australia, Brazil and the Middle East.

CANADIAN NATIONAL EXCURSION train running from Toronto to Windsor derailed in Windsor on Oct 23, with three Michigan suffering minor injuries among the 340 aboard. Vandals were blamed for the derailment, caused by an opened switch. The train was traveling under slow orders placed after a similar derailment last May 18. The lead engine did not derail, but the second unit, a lounge, diner and coach left the rails. None of the cars overturned.

CANADIAN NATIONAL TRAINS effective Oct 30 have no smoking in open sections of sleeping cars. Passengers smoking in diners must ask their neighbors if they object to smoking before lighting up.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND RAILWAY has a new full-color brochure out describing the NORTHLANDER, the Toronto-Timmins train using the ex-TEE equipment. Handsome interior shots are included. Passengers have choice of compartment or 2-and-1 coach seating at the same fare.

VIA SYSTEM TIMETABLE dated Oct 30-Apr 29 is very similar to the previous one. CN trains 120, 121, 122 and 123 Toronto-North Bay have been speeded up by 10-25 minutes south of North Bay, despite the addition of a stop.

CN HAS INSTITUTED a 3-day roundtrip ticket for Blue fare plus 10%, good on all Corridor trains except certain Montreal-Toronto trains, and not on Fridays.

THOSE EARLIER REPORTS that the SUPER CONTINENTAL would be reduced to one Toronto sleeper have not proven true. The train has been seen leaving Toronto repeatedly with at least two 4-8-4 sleepers and the 24-roomette dorm.

EDMONTON'S TRANSIT SYSTEM is expected to start operations next Apr 1; but the underground pedestrian ways will be openedto the public Dec 5 to allow people to walk thru the city safe from the cold prairie winds. The official name of the first leg of the system is "North East L.R.T." The "LRT" stands for Light Rail Transit.

THE CN-AMTRAK station in Vancouver will be used as the VIA Rail terminal in that city until improvements are made to the CP station. The latter was named in the government's Preferred Plan as the station for Vancouver.

LAWSUITS TO BE filed in Vancouver will seek a halt to the new North Vancouver "Sea-Bus" ferries operated by B.C. Hydro Transit. It is charged that large swells generated by the craft are disrupting activities in the Burrard Inlet harbour.

THE "PRINCESS MARGUERITE" showed a loss of $133,000 in the 1977 season. The Victoria office now employs 30 persons, compared to about 6 under CP Rail.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH CN Railway for a new agreement for operating GO Transit services have reached an impasse, the Toronto Area Transit Operating Authority said this month. In other news, the TATOA has recommended a GO Transit fare increase of approximately one cent per mile.

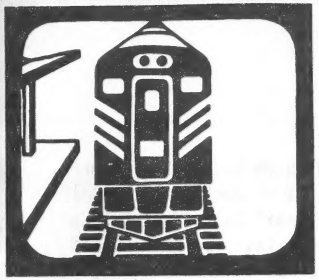
URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION this month submitted to the White House Office of Management and Budget proposed legislation for financing mass transit, covering the next 5 years beginning with FY 1979 next October. Next fiscal year's funding for transit would be $500 million higher than the current fiscal year. The legislative package includes $4.2 billion for operating subsidies and related matters for a 2-year period, and $8.5 billion for new transit projects for the next 5 years. Since the present fund for new systems has almost been depleted, new legislation is needed to provide such funding. Secretary Brock Adams had considered a much larger increase for transit, the funds for which would be obtained from new gasoline taxes; however, Congress hasn't yet passed legislation for such taxes, and a big increase now was ruled out.

A NEW FEDERAL law extending mass transit subsidies for two years, thru Sept 1980, was signed "reluctantly" by President Carter on Nov 16. The legislation authorizes $60 million for this purpose--emergency subsidies for transit systems, plus $20 million for FY 1979 for cities that are not eligible for the emergency funding program.

BART WILL BEGIN regular Saturday service on Nov 19, with trains running 8am-midnight. Sunday service is expected to start in 1978. BART has previously run Saturday shopper service during winter holiday seasons.

SOUTH SHORE RAILROAD may be saved. RTA and Indiana officials are hopeful of raising funds this year to match federal funds to enable the Chicago-area commuter line to continue operations.



CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY in January will take bids on 70 new transit cars, part of a replacement of 600 old cars now running. Three American firms--Boeing Vertol, Pullman-Standard, and Budd Co.--are expected to be among the bidders.

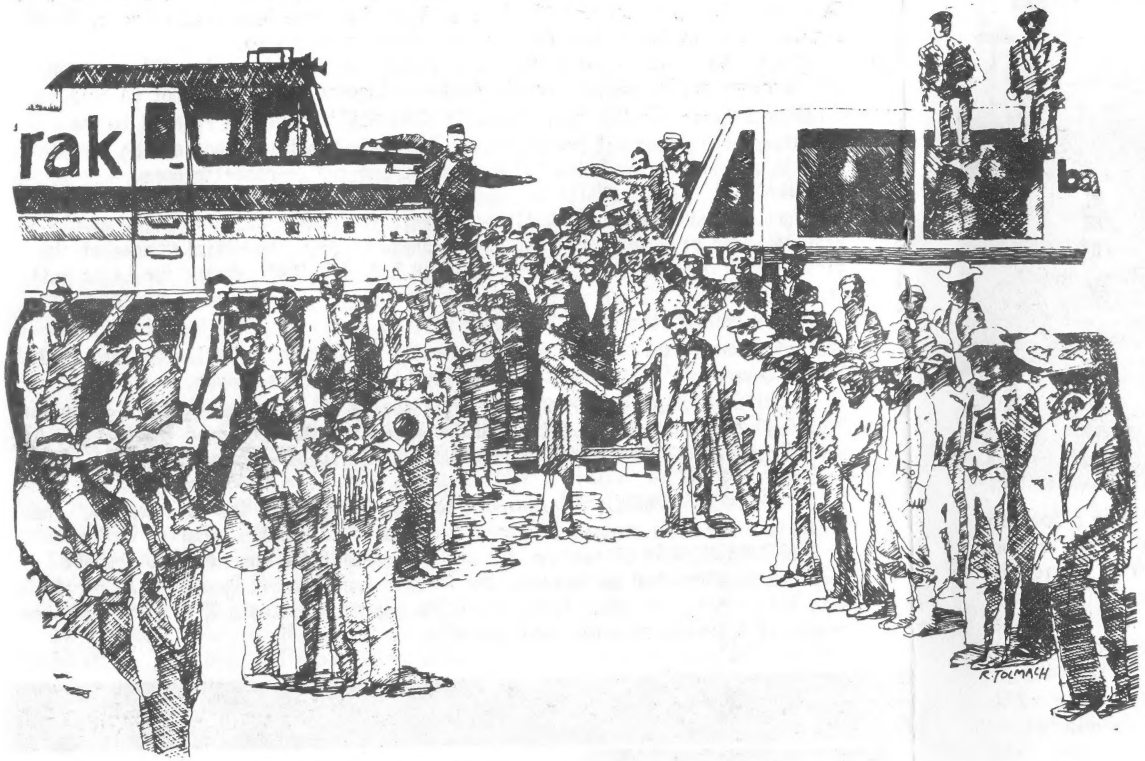
DOT GENERAL COUNSEL Linda Kamm told the annual meeting of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials in Atlantic City NJ this month that the need for energy conservation will change the way this country handles its highway and mass transit programs. The transportation industry must be in the forefront of energy conservation, she said, because transportation uses 50% of all U.S. petroleum consumed. The general direction in the future will be: updated and more flexible grant programs; re-examination of who gets grant money and who can decide to use it; more intermodal planning; and completion of the interstate highway system.

A STRIKE OF trainmen and conductors against the Long Island Rail Road, set for Nov 14, was postponed to allow for court hearings.

WASHINGTON'S METRO SYSTEM is now running at 95-97% reliability, reports the NY Times. The 17-mile system is carrying about 130,000 people daily, just 10,000 less than the BART system, tho it runs only 6am-8pm weekdays.

NEW YORK CITY'S Transit Authority public affairs director Jacques Nevard apparently leaped to his death from the 13th floor of the Transit Authority building in Brooklyn on Nov 5.

INTERMODALISM IN THE FAR WEST



by Jim Russell & Roger Hooson

The West's first intermodal train station was dedicated on Oct 28 in Richmond, California, designed to connect all three Amtrak lines out of Oakland with BART and buses, giving Amtrak riders quick and easy access by rail to much of the San Francisco Bay Area. The ground-breaking ceremony was held last Dec 16 (see RTN, 1st Dec, 1976) and a July opening promised. Now, only three months late, the first ceremonial trains were taking invited guests on an inaugural ride, with regular scheduled service commencing Oct 30, with the fall schedule changes. At the same time, a new station for the SAN JOAQUIN at Madera in the San Joaquin Valley was being dedicated, as was a state-sponsored bus connection from Sacramento to the SAN JOAQUIN at Stockton. The threatened discontinuance of this much-abused little Amfleet train would not be mentioned for over a week yet.

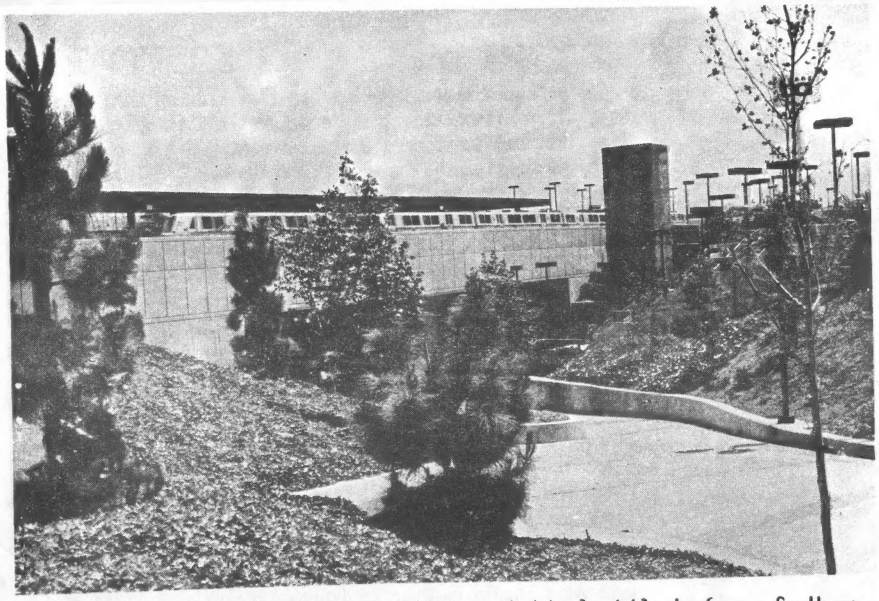
Today it was time for a celebration, and the inaugural event was heralded by eye-catching newspaper ads for several days around the end of October. "BART and Amtrak Have Got It Together" cried the ads as they showed a magnificent drawing by Caltrans employee/RTN reader Rich Tolmach (reproduced above), which depicted Central Pacific chief engineer Samuel S. Montague and his UP counterpart Grenville M. Dodge congratulating each other in front of an Amtrak F40 locomotive and a BART "A" cab unit, with appropriately posed worthies from A. J. Russell's famous 1869 photo at Promontory Point.

At 8:54am a special BART train that had run thru from Daly City--without the transfer at Oakland's MacArthur station that regular riders must make--arrived at Richmond, carrying dignitaries to the event. The El Cerrito High School Band struck up "California, Here I Come" as Governor Jerry Brown, State Senator James Mills, Caltrans Director Adriana Gianturco, Amtrak's Neal Owen, BART's Frank Herringer and other officials detrained and made their way to the speaker's platform.

Governor Brown told the assemblage of 100-200 that the new construction would "maximize alternatives." He called it a "small but significant step" toward better transportation for public transit riders "and for those who prefer the train to getting in line on the freeway." He picked up a golden-colored spike from the speaker's rostrum. "I don't quite think this rates a golden spike" he said as he eyed the spike philosophically. He turned to a cluster of officials. "What material is this? What is this REALLY?" "Cast iron" came the reply. "Cast iron," repeated Brown. "I think this occasion rates a cast iron spike." The implication was that much more should be done to improve transportation in the state.

As if to remind assembled rail supporters of hardships and problems still ahead, the chilly gray skies opened up in the middle of the ceremony and let fall a light shower of rain. But more noticed than the dampness was another event

California's Governor Brown pauses before a TV camera while boarding the ceremonial SAN JOAQUIN on Oct 28 in Richmond. Behind him, in the vestibule, is Caltrans Director Adriana Gianturco. To the left of Brown in the photo is Senator Mills. Photo from Ektachrome by RTN.



early in the ceremony: The speaker was interrupted by loud blasts from a Southern Pacific freight locomotive, blasts which grew louder and continued as the engine, pulling 85 empty freight cars, roared past the crowd, a few feet from the yellow line across which the crowd had been repeatedly advised not to step. The Governor and all the others waited patiently for what seemed like five minutes as the cars rattled past. The face of a ruddy-skinned SP employee was said to have become ashen at the freight's approach. The SP had promised Amtrak to hold the trains during the ceremony, and indeed a westbound train pulled up quietly a bit later and waited well beyond the station until the ceremonial SAN JOAQUIN had drawn away.

The SP itself was not officially represented at the ceremony, altho the SP's Mr. Biaggini was introduced in absentia. Three SP officials--Jones, Monk and Jochner--were instead riding the SAN JOAQUIN from Oakland. Also not represented was Greyhound, apparently as yet uninvolved in the intermodal station, altho last December the bus company was prominently present at the ground-breaking. The two bus companies actually involved are AC Transit and the privately-operated Traveler's Transit, which makes connections to Marin County points.

Before the conclusion of the ceremony and the arrival of train 710, Senator Mills was presented with a plaque by Neal Owen, to honor his legislative work in getting the facility started. The plaque will hang in the station.

Right on time, the eastbound SAN JOAQUIN, with F40 engine 222 pulling five Amfleet cars (21827, 20217, 21830, 20042 & 21829), drew in to a stop and became the first train officially to make passenger transfers at the new station (see cover photo). The first two cars were for the invited guests, altho train separation was not maintained, and Gov. Brown spent most of his time in the revenue cars talking with passengers and newsmen.

Gov. Brown was heard questioning an SP conductor just before Port Chicago, where the conductor would detrain, querying him about "long work days" and "deadhead runs." The conductor turned pinkish, choked, and later confided that he wished he hadn't come to work. Getting one crew to work thru Oakland-Bakersfield is a priority recognized by Caltrans.

At another point, Brown was overheard telling the SP officials that they were "obstructionists" in dragging their feet on development of the Bay Area-Sacramento corridor. Adriana Gianturco had been waxing enthusiastic about proposed

increased rail service on the route, and the SP men had interrupted with a caution that the state should go slow on that idea.

At Stockton a high school band welcomed the Governor, who posed in front of the train against an "Amtrak Stockton-Sacramento" banner. The new bus service, contracted with Greyhound, leaves Sacramento at 10am to meet the southbound SAN JOAQUIN, and is back in the capital at 5:15pm with travelers from train 711. An intermediate stop is made at the Greyhound station in Lodi.

A ceremonial stop was made at Madera, with regular stops beginning Oct 30. The old Santa Fe station there has been demolished, and in its place, in a dusty out-of-town locale, is some fresh asphalt and a school-bus type shelter. There most guests detrained to ride #711 back to Richmond(Gov. Brown rode the new bus to Sacramento).

The biggest hitch of the day came upon arrival back in Richmond, where the guests from the train found themselves trapped in the platform area, with both east and westbound gates locked. One hopes that in regular service such problems with the new unmanned station will be at most minimal.

NARP URGES AMTRAK NOT TO SELL CARS

NARP this month called upon Amtrak to halt its sale of passenger cars. The rail passenger association said it feels "very strongly" about this, and would explore the possibility of legal action if necessary to stop the disposal of the cars, most of which are described as needing only "minimal work." NARP Executive Director Ross Capon said that Amtrak is neglecting the tour and excursion market, and that the retention of these cars could help that business. Capon also pointed out that the bi-level cars may not function well, another energy crisis could occur, and other reasons for holding the cars. Perhaps 50 of the cars should be sold, NARP said. A complete list of cars for sale follows:

7502	7504	7506	7508	7510	7518	7520	7521--7522		7528--7529		7530--7531	
3820	4548	6056	2560*	2782	6082	6090	6404	6433	6434	6435	6443	6447
6802	8381	3347	4824*	5256	5271	6048	8082	3341	3345	5268	6041	6810
5462	5468	2366	2796	3250	3252	3253	3802	3821	4521	4539	5686	6044
6441	6442	6449	6800	6801	7002	7252	7259	7512	7513	7523--7524		8067
8074	8110	8111	8114	8115	8116	8117	8118	8410	8500	1705*	2243*	2520
2764	2768	2774	2775	2787	2789	2791	2792*	3225	5456	5609	5613*	5615*
5642	6063*	6403	7255	8066	1710	2155	2231	2234	2235	2650	2799*	2830*
3232	3346	3349	5631*	6060	6807*	2778	8081	8087	1592	2219	2236	2290
2291	2370	2402	2450	2805	2817	3801	3951	5259*	5260	5444	5455*	5469
5472	6415	6448	8083	8380	6451	1189*	3501*	4476	4537	8065*	3642	3964
7413*	7422*	7800*	3710		Dome cars:		9800	9200	9202	9224	9541	9381
9383	9420*	9401*	9212	9330*	9468*	9400	9370*	9464*				

*Asterisks indicate cars damaged by wreck, fire, flood, etc.; all others are described as needing only "minimal work." Numbers connected by dashes indicate a pair of articulated cars.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"There's a joke in the airline industry that you can't even go to hell without passing thru Atlanta. Our members know that's not true. They've been to hell aboard the FLORIDIAN, and they never got near Atlanta."

--John DeLora, Michigan ARP, in FLORIDIAN testimony, Oct 27.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"Amtrak's plan to cancel 72 trains in the Northeast Corridor between Washington and Boston last week was called off when House-Senate conferees voted an additional eight million dollars to keep the trains running."

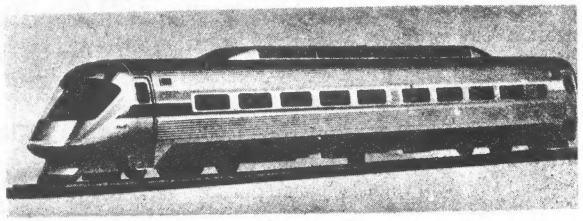
--UTU News, Nov 12.

(Somebody might've noticed they were missing.)

Mixed Train of Thoughts

THE NATIONAL LIMITED was not rerouted away from Dayton OH on Oct 30. At almost the eleventh hour Amtrak rescinded the order. The present routing will evidently be maintained for at least 30 days. The Ohio Association of RR Passengers is claiming victory in this matter, as the organization worked vigorously to prevent the change. Apparently Amtrak schedules that have been distributed (we haven't seen one) do not show the retention of Dayton; the train times there are 8:40am westbound and 10:10pm eastbound.....

PULLMAN-STANDARD STRIKE may not be settled until sometime into next year, according to gloomy rumors from insiders. And so work is still halted on the new Amtrak bi-level cars..... AUTOMOBILE USAGE CONTINUES higher and higher, stimulated by an artificial world over-supply of petroleum this year, that is expected to continue into next year. Gasoline in Berkeley at present costs as little as 54.9¢ per gallon at self-service stations--no price increase in about the last year, in spite of inflation; thus the cost of gas is effectively going down. The Shah of Iran was in the U.S. on Oct 16, and said at a press conference that he will try to keep a price freeze on petroleum thru next year. But he warned that the U.S. must try harder to conserve energy to face the years beyond 1978 when petroleum will become scarcer..... A RECENT ISSUE of the Smithsonian Magazine contains what is evidently a very good article on Amtrak, in the "Phenomena, Comment, and Notes" department..... THE BUDD COMPANY says its SPV-2000 program is progressing "as scheduled." S. W. Madeira, Manager of Marketing told RTN's Pete Roehm that from mid-October to mid-December is a period of extensive operating tests to establish performance characteristics of the updated RDC cars. Budd will do this while running to actual commuter schedules around Philadelphia. Then until mid-January the car will be adjusted and retrofitted according to results of the test runs. In mid-January a series of demonstrations will be held throughout the U.S. and Canada. Budd said the first production models would be available early in 1979. The photo above is of a model of the new car..... AMTRAK HAS PRINTED a handsome "Passenger's Manual" for the bi-level cars, showing each facility in color drawings and explaining how to use each--deluxe, family, special, and economy bedrooms.....



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AMTRAK BOARD APPOINTEES won't get final Senate approval until next year, it appears. The Senate reportedly won't find time to complete action on the names submitted by Carter before it recesses for the holidays. Thus Amtrak must go on thru this crisis period with a "lame duck" Board..... CHARLES E. BERTRAND, Amtrak's VP and General Manager of the Northeast Corridor, becomes president and chief executive officer of the D&H Railway as of Nov 15. Albert M. Schofield replaces him at Amtrak..... A RAILROAD WEDDING takes place Nov 20 when Mike Lang and Joan Frances Follmer are wed aboard MoPac observation car 750 at the National Museum of Transport in St. Louis. The car was used by former President Harry Truman in his noted rail travels. Invitations in the form of tickets were issued to friends. The museum is a non-profit rail museum at 3015 Barrett Station Road..... FORMER AMTRAK COACHES 5620 and 7511 were seen last month at Maxwell CA, between Davis and Orland, stencilled "Sold to Purdy Co".....

AMTRAK DINER "FITZGERALD" (#8087) now up for sale is wanted by the town of Fitzgerald, Georgia--the home town of Amtrak's Jim Bryant.....

THE 22 TRAINS scheduled to be cut Nov 6 were not cut, following the vote to give Amtrak $8 million in supplemental funds. Congress directed that the trains be kept running thru this fiscal year. There must have been a lot of confusion with train schedules, with people not knowing until the last minute--or beyond--whether or not a train would be running..... WHAT TO EXPECT from the coming Amtrak system rationalization--a prognostication based upon reading between lines, from secreted information and from rumor: Supporters of the NATIONAL LIMITED, the LONE STAR, the INTER-AMERICAN, the LAKE SHORE LIMITED, the MOUNT RAINIER, the SAN JOAQUIN will have to battle to keep their trains running. The FLORIDIAN will be discontinued temporarily with an uncertain future; it will depend upon support from the areas it serves (and could serve). A move will be made to drop the EMPIRE BUILDER and the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, with Amtrak perhaps succeeding in dropping the BUILDER. Amtrak will attempt to discontinue the SOUTHWEST LIMITED route and combine the SOUTHWEST, the SF ZEPHYR, and the PIONEER into a single "City of Everywhere" train, ala Union Pacific, which splits at Ogden. If the NATIONAL LIMITED and LONE STAR go too, this would leave Kansas City with no passenger service at all, not to mention Albuquerque and other places, and would take Amtrak off most of the good Santa Fe lines, where Amtrak gets its best operation..... ONE QUICKLY NOTES that the Northeast Corridor is totally free from such route discontinuance. One thing that must be avoided like the plague is sectionalism--such as the Northeast versus the rest of the country. Wouldn't the Washington bureaucrats love to have rail supporters divided against themselves! The way we see it, all the trains in the country belong to us--we travel the whole country and might ride any of them, not just those at our doorstep. (But just let them try to discontinue the SAN JOAQUIN!).....

* * *

BESIDES DROPPING ROUTES, Amtrak is supposed to add some when rationalizing the system. Some of the routes spoken about are Washington-Cumberland-Pittsburgh-Cleveland and Cleveland-Chicago; and building up the Inland Route on the East Coast..... THE AMTRAK CUTS could not have come at a worse time, said an Amtrak spokesman--when Amtrak ridership was up 6% this fiscal year (FY 77) and revenues were up 12%. Cutting service will of course be counterproductive and send revenue and ridership down, resulting in a downward course that Amtrak reversed, and making rail ridership look bad on paper..... THE BUS COMPANIES have played no small role in the present Amtrak fiscal crisis, for their calls for federal help are worrying the OMB that they will become another "drain on the treasury"..... WHAT'S THE EFFECT of the Amtrak budget cut on the planned-for Sacramento-San Diego overnight train (which one newspaper says may be called the COASTER)? The train may not be cut out of the budget altogether, but Amtrak will probably be stalling on the startup, insiders believe. And anyway SP is stalling by demanding a private study be made for it on costs of line improvements before startup..... SENATOR JAMES MILLS, Amtrak Board appointee said this month that when he is on the Board he will press the labor issue, especially in the case of the SAN JOAQUIN. California officials are irritated that Amtrak has taken no hard stand on these issues. On the SAN JOAQUIN four crews are required to do the work that two could.....

AND TONY HASWELL, founder of NARP and another Amtrak Board appointee, told the press late last month that "the first thing I'm going to do is go thru that organization with a fine-tooth comb to find out just where all that money is going and what it's doing"..... THE "EL CAMINO", the Baxter Ward "commuter" train in Southern California, may get running yet. Amtrak and Caltrans are in "serious" negotiations over the train, which is to be run in conjunction with Los Angeles County. Public Utilities hearings still must be held in January to determine whether Santa Fe is obliged to operate the train.....

A NEW RUSSIAN "bullet train", the ER200, began runs on the Moscow-Leningrad route early this month, but at normal train speeds and not the high speeds it was designed for.....

AUTO-TRAIN CORPORATION announced on Nov 14 that the ICC has approved its new lower fares Lorton-Sanford. The year-round auto-carrying rate is now $99 one way; passenger fares vary from $79 to $49 according to season. On northbound runs now thru Dec 25 the fare is $49 per passenger, and also from Jan 9-Feb 10. There are other reductions, including costs of compartments..... WALL STREET JOURNAL of Nov 3 carries a long front-page article on a club of California men--the "California Western Historical Society" which rides freight trains hobo-style for entertainment. A Journal reporter went along on a weekend trip Sacramento to Winnemucca and return and describes the events of the run, including a ride in the engines..... A HEADON COLLISION of two freight trains south of Seattle on the BN main line delayed Amtrak passenger trains starting Oct 9. Several BN and WP locomotives were badly damaged in the wreck, which forced single-track operation of the double-track line..... SOURCES CLOSE TO the Amfleet say that Amtrak will phase out Amcafe cars except in the Northeast Corridor. This means that many of the present Amcafe cars will be converted to Amdinette cars, with some of the work possibly getting underway this winter..... MANY DOME CARS on Amtrak trains continued to run hot in mid-October due to defective air conditioning. One RTN reader writes that altho a mid-October day was cool at Seattle, a clear sky provided lots of solar heat for EMPIRE BUILDER dome patrons, and that the train at Yakima was at least 20° hotter than the outside weather.....

EAST COAST SCHEDULES being up in the air at the last minute for the fall changeover this year, the distribution of correct schedules has been problematic. As of Nov 2, Florida trains' timetables were out on hastily-printed yellow sheets that looked worse than some former RTN printing at its worst. Equipment on the Florida trains also seemed to vary--slumbercoaches have been seen one day on the Miami sections, the next on the St. Pete section, and the next on the northbound FLORIDIAN. Another day, the slumbercoach was added at Jacksonville to the northbound METEOR. Reports a Florida correspondent: "The northbound METEOR, Miami section, can't cope with the schedule, and regularly delays the Jacksonville departure by half an hour. This results in the St. Pete section sitting at Jacksonville for an hour. The St. Pete section diner doesn't operate while the train waits at Jax from 5-6pm; the crew apparently boards at Jacksonville." This delay negates the cutting out of the time-delaying backup move into old Jax terminal....

LATE NEWS

(Publication of this issue of RTN has been delayed in order to bring news of the Amtrak Board meeting of Nov 16.)

AMTRAK VOTES TO SUSPEND "FLORIDIAN"

Amtrak's Board of Directors meeting on Nov 16 decided to suspend service on the Chicago-Florida FLORIDIAN starting Jan 19 as a budget-cutting mechanism. Amtrak said that when and if money is available to recommence service, it would prefer routing the train Chicago-Indianapolis-Louisville-Nashville-Chattanooga-Atlanta-Macon-Savannah. Amtrak said it would not run the train on the Monon between Chicago and Louisville, and south of Nashville would not run it thru Birmingham and Montgomery.

The Board also voted to move to Task 5 in applying the route criteria on these trains: the EMPIRE BUILDER, NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, LONE STAR, INTER-AMERICAN, and SAN JOAQUIN. Task 5 involves soliciting public comment about the routes, and Amtrak said it would announce the procedures for obtaining this comment in a few days. No action was taken on the status of the LAKE SHORE LIMITED, but DOT Secretary Adams obtained comments of the Board members about the train whose 2-year experimental period is now up.

MAILING DATE OF THIS ISSUE: Nov 17/18, 1977.

THE ENORMOUS AMOUNT of petroleum consumed by automobile overusage is reflected in the astounding statistic that the U.S. could save 41 million barrels of crude oil yearly merely by keeping their automobile tires inflated properly.....

WHY ARE PASSENGER trains never mentioned in those Association of American Railroads ads, even tho Amtrak is a member of AAR? Reader Richard Wilhelm sought to find out, and learned from the AAR that when Amtrak joined it specifically excluded itself from the AAR's public relations and legislative activities, so the AAR's agreement with Amtrak prohibits the AAR from advertising on Amtrak's behalf. Incidentally, the AAR said their polls and surveys showed that the public has a "high awareness" of rail passenger service, but not of the importance of rail freight. Sounds like a good reason for railroads to give good service to Amtrak.....

ARMY-NAVY GAME on Nov 26 in Philadelphia will again have Amtrak special trains running to and from it--Amfleet consists with E60 locomotives, it is reported. Two trains are to run from Washington, one from New York, and one from Harrisburg.....

MEXICO CITY'S SUBWAY system has such heavy ridership, reports a tourist just returned, that there is no way it can handle any increase in traffic.....

SAN DIEGAN RIDERSHIP just keeps increasing. In October the trains carried 17.1 per cent more passengers than in Oct 1976--47,391 compared to 40,462.....

SENATOR RICHARD SCHWEIKER of Pennsylvania has asked the Carter Administration to consider electrification of the Conrail main line between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh. The 25-mile line is heavily used..... SAFETY GLASS SAMPLES are being tested by the FRA this month at Aberdeen MD--glass samples from 14 manufacturers. One sample already has reportedly resisted rifle shots and cement blocks; maybe a replacement for Lexan is on the horizon..... FREE KIDDY RIDE coupons from newspapers, good for one free under-12 fare to anywhere on the Amtrak system, will expire after Nov 30 (they are not good on Thanksgiving weekend). A story reported by the Southwest RHS is that when the ads appeared in Houston papers, the next morning a crowd of people appeared at the kiddy train ride at Astro World park.....

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THE MICHIGAN EXECUTIVE was to go Amfleet on Nov 7. The Michigan Dept of State Highways & Transportation said that about 270 passengers ride the train daily to Detroit. The train is supported by about $250,000 yearly in state allocations...

THE DOT TESTED last month an ultra-fast locomotive with a linear induction electric motor and jet engines. The machine reached 255mph on a 6-mile test track at Pueblo, Colorado. But a DOT spokesman noted that "there is not a roadbed in the world today that could handle this level of speed"..... A PUBLIC HEARING will be held Nov 21 in the San Diego area before final approval of a plan by the Metropolitan Transit Development Board to acquire tracks of the San Diego & Arizona Eastern Railway that SP wants to abandon, to use for a proposed rain transit system and for freight service that would be contracted out to a private company. A tropical storm washed out some of the tracks in the fall of 1976, and the estimated repair cost is $1.2 million..... THE PRESIDENT OF Continental Trailways, J. Kevin Murphy, wrote in a letter to the NY Times recently saying that if Amtrak services were eliminated tomorrow there would be no loss of transportation services to travelers because the bus industry services "every single community which Amtrak serves plus an additional 15,000 communities" and "all without any subsidy." Murphy also said that buses are far more energy-efficient than Amtrak trains. One fact he didn't point out is that travelers would not all switch from trains to buses, but would switch primarily to energy-inefficient cars and planes instead...

WHICH REMINDS US of the testimony of RTN reader Edwin Ellis of Wheaton IL in favor of retaining the FLORIDIAN. Ellis is 23 years old and gave up auto ownership 2 years ago. Traveling 20,000 miles a year, he does 80% of his intercity travel by rail, with the rest by air or bus. Quote: "I have found it not only possible but usually more productive and enjoyable to rely almost totally on public transportation... Reduced use of the automobile is a quasi-national goal, isn't it?" How does he decide which mode to use for a long trip? "My mind initially dismisses bus as being essentially a short haul instrument, and my backside adds that the bus has a maximum range of 200 miles or 4hrs"..... page 19

CARS & CONSISTS

*MOUNT RAINIER, train 797, Seattle Oct 30: engines 219 (F40PH), 239 (F40PHR, ex-554); cars 21171, 21263, 21262, 20231 (Amdinette), 21260, 21169, 21175, 21170, 20220 (Amdinette), 21261, 21108, 21174 (train sold out one hour before departure).

*BN Financial Analyst's Special, Minneapolis-Billings-Alliance-Lincoln, Sep 27: (all BN except noted) engines 5381, 8000, 5500; heater car 19, baggage 216, coach 1115, business cars "Clark Fork River", "Yellowstone River", Kootenai River", "Mississippi River", coach "Stevens Pass", UP slpr "Sun Cape", slpr "Jefferson Pass", Slpr-lounge "St. Croix River", diner "Lake Michigan", lounge "Como" (ex-GN coach 1209 newly rebuilt), parlor "Deschutes River", slpr "Big Horn Pass", UP slpr "Sun Manor", slpr "Stampede Pass", business car "Red River."

*TWIN CITIES HIAWATHA, train 10, Minneapolis Oct 29 (last train before time change): engine 233 (F40PHR, ex-558), cars 21875, 20223 (Amdinette), 21815, 1362 baggage, SP 6750 mail.

*HILLTOPPER, train 35, Williamson WV Nov 8: engines 611 (SDP), 705 (P30 with engine failure); cars 20015 (Amcafe), 21842.

*DRGW special move Denver-Grand Junction Oct 2 had consist of BN special above except engines DRGW 3109, 3121, 5381, and DRGW car 100 "Wilson McCarthy" in place of "Red River."

*LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 49, Cleveland Nov 5: engines 599, 443; cars 1522 (bag-dorm NY-Chic.), 2020 "Silver Siesta", 2815 "Otter River", 8334, 3324, 5651, 5650, 5648, 2812 "Green River", 1185. Train 48, South Bend Nov 5: engines 647, 411; cars 1530, 2027 "Loch Ness", 2802 "Halifax City", 8336, 3360, 5646, 5662, 5657, 5640, 2150 "Silver Flower", bag-mail no. ?.

*SUNSET LIMITED, train 2, L.A. Oct 7: engines 618, 542; cars 1070, 9943, 9925, 3395, 8031, 2605 "Pacific Castle", 2731 "Pine Ring", 2608 "Pacific Crest", dome observation 9253 "Silver Lookout." Train hit truck at Fontana CA, lost 1 hour.

*SILVER METEOR, train 88 (St. Pete section), Lakeland FL Oct 30: engine 630; cars 1411, 4564, 4565, 4557, 4467, 2534 "Robin", 8060, 3212 "Pine Tree State", 2765 "Petersburg." Train 84 (Miami sec.) Winter Haven FL Oct 30: engine 611; cars 1426, 4410, 4427, 4582, 4420, 3333, 8088, 2690, 2695, SCL 309 open obs bus. car. Train 83 (Miami sec.) Winter Haven Oct 30: engines 645, 646; cars 8014, 1306, 1415, 4414, 4421, 4452, 4573, 4570, 3409, 8020, 3201 "Woodland Stream", 2380, 2691, 2031 "Loch Tay."

*EL TAPATIO, NdeM train 5 (Mexico-Guadalajara) Nov 3: First section: baggage, "Ignacio Aldama", "Isla De Lobos", "Sierra Madre", S.C.D. "Valencia", "Hungria", S.C.D. "Cataluna", "Tulum","Festin" (Coche Comedor), "Club Guadalajara", S.C.D. "Napoles", "Noriega", S.C.D. "La Coruna", S.C.D. "Presa Mal Paso", "Valle De Bravo", "Cassiopeia", "Luxemburgo", "Guadalajara" (F.C.P., obs. deadheading). Second Section: "Presidente Carranza", "Isla De Serafim", "Azuluana", "Mina Cantabrio", "Orion", "Acuario", "Golfo De Mexico", "Playa Grande", "Malaga", "Lago Texcoco", "Golfo De Cortes", S.C.D. "Presa Solis", "Sierra Gorda", S.C.D. "Sor Juardines De La Cruz", S.C.D. "Rosaran Zapata", "Club Cuitla Huac."

RAIL FANTRIPS

Dec 30-31: Private RR car excursion Washington DC-Harrisburg PA and return on "Lionel Ives." For info and reservations: Rail Travel Association, PO Box 62, Alexandria VA 22313.

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On the following page is a form for submitting ratings. You need not use the form--just write on a postcard or sheet of paper using your own format if you wish.

INSTRUCTIONS: Rate as many trains as you wish, but only those you have personally ridden this year. Rate each train on each of the 11 categories (A-K) below:

(A) Your impression of overall quality of service, taking all into account; (B) On-board personnel's service (except food-lounge personnel); (C) Food & lounge crew's service; (D) Food quality; (E) Car condition (cleanliness, repair, etc.); (F) Desirability of route it follows; (G) Station services; (H) Track condition; (I) Desirability of train's schedule; (J) Train promotion; (K) Type of cars used.

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1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9

Extremely poor — Average, acceptable — Extremely good

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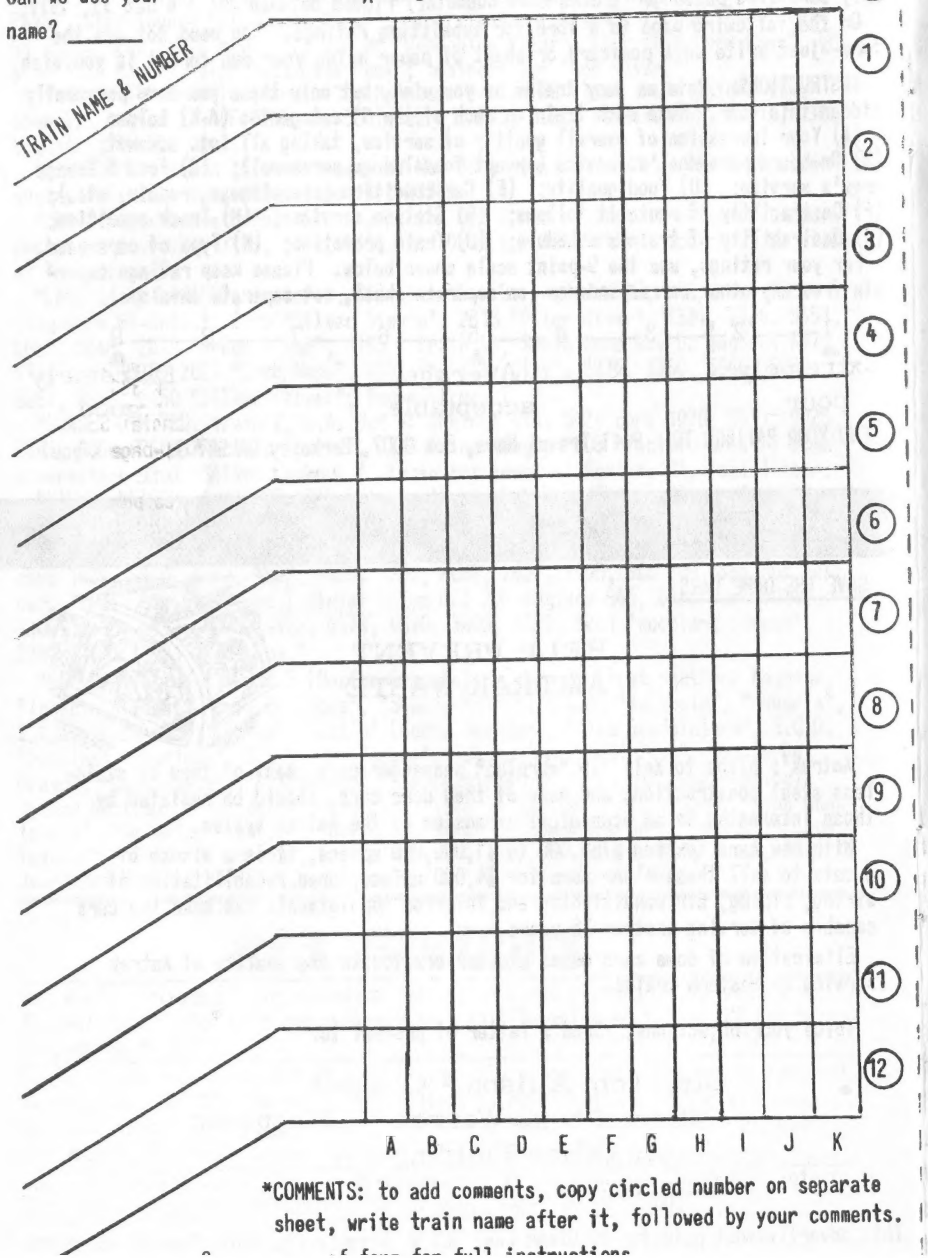

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